

# Indiana House of Representatives

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## News and Information

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 7, 2005

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## REP. SMITH SAYS ENERGY ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

INDIANAPOLIS—With some energy costs expected to increase as much as 34 percent this winter, State Rep. Vernon G. Smith (D-Gary) said there are places for Hoosiers with low-incomes to turn for help.

"I would recommend those Indiana citizens with incomes at or below 150 percent of the poverty guidelines to apply for assistance through the state's Energy Assistance Program," said Dr. Smith. "One can apply through the Northwest Indiana Community Action Corporation (NICA) beginning in November."

One can obtain an application at NICA, which is located at 5518 Calumet Ave. in Hammond. The telephone number is 219-937-3500. The toll-free number is 1-800-826-7871.

The Indiana Community Action Association also has weatherization programs available for low-income Hoosiers. The website is [www.incap.org](http://www.incap.org) and the telephone number is 1-800-382-9895.

In addition, Dr. Smith said various energy companies offer special programs for seniors and those with disabilities. Cinergy's program is called "Helping Hand." The fund is available for qualifying customers who are at least 60 years old or are disabled. For more information about the Cinergy program, access the website at [www.cinergypsi.com](http://www.cinergypsi.com) or call 1-800-521-2232.

Another option for dealing with high energy bills, added Dr. Smith, is to average those bills so they are level throughout the year. This will prevent extremely large bills from coming due during high energy consumption months, like January and February. One should contact his or her local energy company to arrange this bill averaging payment plan.

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***This release can be accessed on the Internet at [www.IN.gov/H68](http://www.IN.gov/H68)***

